

How to Remove Unwanted Programs from the Windows Vista Welcome Center

Each time I setup a new computer, I remove a lot of preinstalled programs from the computer before giving it to the new owner. In Windows Vista, its rather easy to see the list of pre-installed software including 60-day trials of Office, a trial subscription to an antivirus program, etc. because they are displayed on the Vista Welcome Center when you boot the computer up.

However there is a interesting feature in Windows Vista, even if you completely remove a program that is listed in the Welcome Center, the information for the program still shows when you reboot your computer.

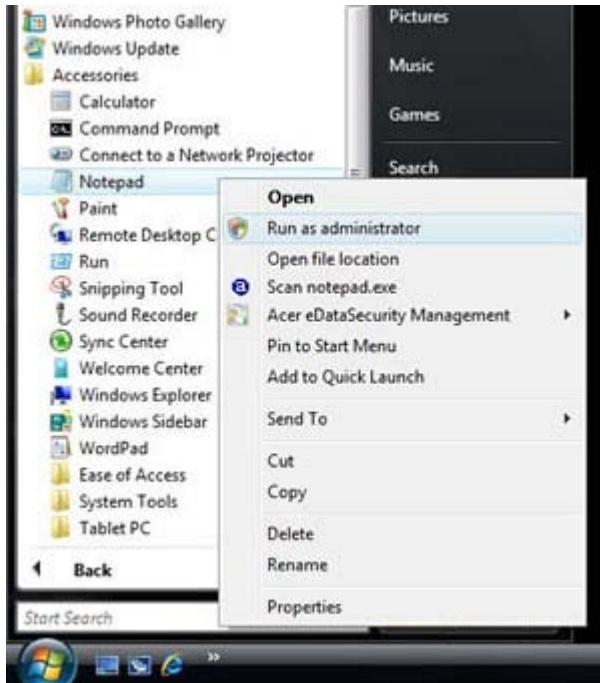
To better explain the situation, look at the screenshot below. This is a typical Windows Vista Welcome Center screen. Its for an Emachine computer, and I have already removed the AOL Internet Services shown in the picture.



Follow these steps to Remove any items from the second section of the Welcome Center showing the preinstalled software.

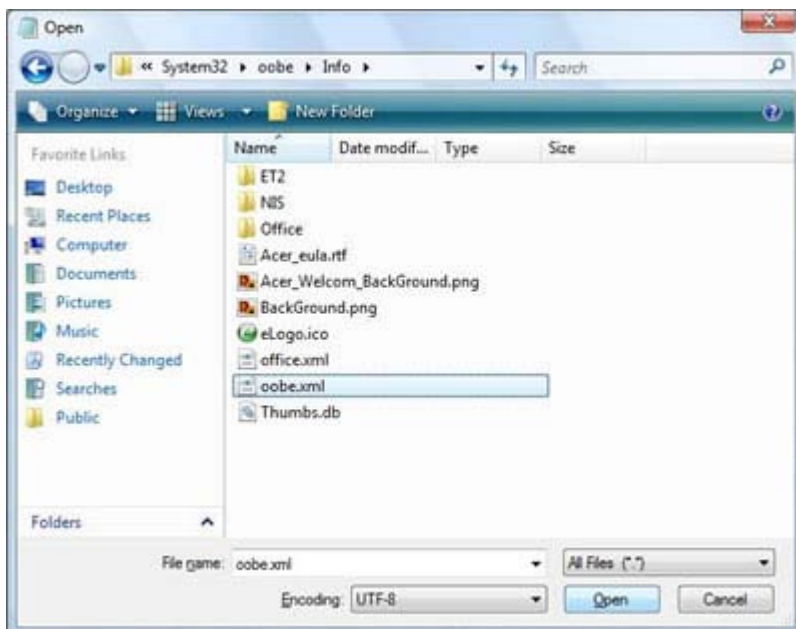


- 1) Click on the Windows Vista Orb in the lower left corner
- 2) Click on All Programs
- 3) Click on Accessories
- 4) Right-click on Notepad
- 5) Click on the Run As Administrator Option (shown below)



- 6) Click on Continue if the User Account Control window appears.

- 7) When Notepad opens, click on the File menu and then click on Open. Locate the **oobe.xml** file in the Windows\System32\oobe\Info folder in Windows Vista. You may have to change the file listing in the window to show all files (see screenshot below).



8) When the file opens, Click File and Save As **OOBESAVE.XML** so that you have a backup of the original.

9) Locate the program you wish to delete by finding it between the <task> and </task> tags. For instance, on one machine I needed to remove the McAfee Security Suite trial version. I found the information in the oobe.xml file as shown below. For each program delete everything between the task tags including the task tags.

```
<task>
  <task id="{1D8650FD-8935-4657-A3E3-C6AD82DCFEB1}"
xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/windows/tasks/v1">
  <name>Protect your PC with McAfee Internet Security Suite</name>
  <icon>"C:\Program Files\McAfee\MSC\mcshell.exe"</icon>
  <description>McAfee Internet Security Suite provides trusted, comprehensive Windows Vista-based
PC protection so your whole family can enjoy Internet activities such as surfing, shopping, banking,
investing, emailing and instant messaging. </description>
  <command>"C:\Program Files\McAfee\MSC\mcshell.exe"</command>
  <sortPriority>1</sortPriority>
  <infotip>Activate your account and protect your PC!</infotip>
  <previewPaneView xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/windows/oobetasks/v1">
  <previewBackground>%systemroot%\system32\oobe\info\background_wc.png</previewBackground>
  <startText>Find out more about</startText>
  <title>Protect your PC with McAfee Security Center</title>
  <columnOne>
  <para>
  <text>Protects you from identity thieves, spammers, predators and other cyber criminals</text>
  </para>
  <para>
  <bullet/>
  <text>Guards your PC from viruses, hackers and spyware</text>
  </para>
  <para>
  <bullet/>
  <text>Backs Up photos, music, videos, and other important files automatically</text>
  </para>
  <para>
  <bullet/>
  <text>Prevents involvement with dangerous web sites, inappropriate activity and offensive pictures
to keep your family safe</text>
  </para>
  <para>
  <bullet/>
  <text>Warns you about suspicious sites that send spam, install adware, or attempt to phish</text>
  </para>
  <para>
  <bullet/>
  <text>Shields your PC around the clock: always active, always protecting, always updating</text>
  </para>
  <para>
  <text>If you have not already done so, please activate your McAfee protection now!</text>
  </para>
  </columnOne>
  </previewPaneView>
  <!-- conditions (optional)
  <conditions>
  <condition name="shell://v1#IsUserAdmin" />
  <condition name="shcond://v1#DateInRange">
```



```
<parameter name="Before" value="12/31/2006 5:00am" />  
</condition>  
</conditions>  
-->  
</task>
```

10) Now save the file. Click on File, Save As, and type oobe.xml as the filename and click Save. When it asks to replace the file, click Yes.

11) Close Notepad by clicking the X in the upper right-hand corner of the window.

12) Reopen the Welcome Center by clicking on the Vista Orb, Click on All Programs, Accessories and Welcome Center. The unwanted program should no longer be shown on the screen.

Note: if for some reason, you deleted the wrong section of the oobe.xml file, open the oobesave.xml file that you saved in step 8 and continue the procedure from step 9 above.